

# Guilford County Schools

## Mission Possible

*The Guilford County Schools (GCS) Mission Possible (MP) plan was designed to recruit and retain highly qualified administrators and teachers at the most impacted schools, increase student achievement, and reward teachers and administrators who work in participating schools that meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) and state goals. The program provides a financial recruitment/retention incentive based on school level and subject matter taught. Performance incentives are awarded based upon Value-Added Data.*

### Needs Assessment Results and General Information

GCS has more than 68,800 students and 9,600 employees in 112 schools of which only 49 made AYP in 2004-05. GCS qualifies as a high-need local education authority based on the number of children who live in poverty (48% receive free/reduced-price lunch (FRPL) and 11,280 children between the ages of 5-17 live in poverty), as well as the percentage of teachers teaching with an emergency or provisional license (average of 4% elementary, 5% middle, 7% high school). The turnover rate was between 23-25 percent at all school levels. Fifty percent of principals have less than 3 years of experience; only 15 percent have more than 10 years. Of the schools participating in the expanded program, only one of the schools made AYP in 2004-05; all have FRPL percentages over 60 percent and comprise of at least 70 percent minority students.

### Background

GCS began using value-added data with William Sanders and SAS Institute in 2000 and will use these data for the new MP program. Before the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant, GCS approved and funded the imple-

mentation of MP for 20 schools in the 2006-07 school year. GCS currently differentiates the salaries of beginning teachers, special education teachers, and career and technical teachers. North Carolina already awards teachers and principals with bonuses of \$750 if students in their school show 1 year's growth and \$1,500 in excess of that.

### Incentives

Incentives include professional development, recruitment and retention bonuses, and performance incentives. They are available to kindergarten through second-grade teachers; third- through eighth-grade teachers of math, language arts, or reading; high school math and English teachers; curriculum facilitators; and principals. Teachers will be eligible to receive a performance incentive based upon their value-added scores. Administrators will be eligible to receive a performance incentive based upon the school meeting AYP and standards established by North Carolina's ABCs of Public Education program. Potential retention/recruitment incentives for teachers and principals range from \$2,500-\$10,000. Performance-based incentives for teachers and principals range from \$2,500-\$5,000.

LOCATION(S)	Guilford County, North Carolina
AWARD DATE	November 2006
DURATION	5 years
PARTNERS	University of North Carolina System, Action Greensboro

## Evaluation

As noted above, teachers and administrators will receive compensation based on value-added data, AYP, and state ABC standards. To evaluate the program's professional development, staff will participate in 360 degree feedback and skill-based training. GCS will contract with the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro to conduct the program evaluation. It will provide both formative and summative evaluations, measure outcomes, and will help streamline the system of staff assessment.

## Resources

Funds from TIF will support expanded programs, including incentive pay and professional development, for seven additional schools in 2007-08, stipends for teachers participating in MP professional development, a project director, and an outside evaluator. GCS supports the regular MP program (more than \$1.5 million), as well as significant professional development opportunities. After the grant period, GCS expects its board of education to continue its support of the program.

## Data Systems

GCS has an existing database with value-added data calculated by SAS that teachers, principals, and administrators can access to review the value-added scores of individual teachers or schools. Data on individual students, schools, and the district can be accessed on the centralized eScholar database. GCS has completed most of the implementation of this warehouse, which includes student demographics, testing information, and other pertinent data. Detailed teacher information will be added.

## Year 2 Activities

Mission Possible has just closed out its second year of recruiting and retaining effective faculty for Guilford County Schools. With this comes a celebration—the program is doing exactly what it set out to do. Mission Possible is retaining teachers in the district's hardest to staff schools. Some of the many program successes for this past school year include:

- Total attrition rate for Mission Possible Schools decreased by 13% from 2006-07.
- Elementary school attrition rate decreased by 18% from 2006-07.
- Middle school attrition rate decreased by 14% from 2006-07.
- High school attrition rate decreased by 23% from 2006-07.
- Mission Possible faculty transferring to non-Mission Possible Schools decreased by 23%.
- Mission Possible faculty transferring to non-Mission Possible positions decreased 39%.
- Mission Possible faculty leaving GCS to teach in another system decreased by 57%.
- Non-Mission Possible faculty transferring into Mission Possible roles increased 15%.
- Participating faculty increased from 348 to 639 with the addition of eight new schools in the 2007-08 school year.
- 74% of eligible math teachers received incentives this year for 2006-07 performance.
- 79% of eligible language arts and English teachers received incentives this year for 2006-07 performance.
- 99% of our faculty have participated in associated professional development opportunities.

### **Outlook for Year 3**

Mission Possible faculty now total 639 distributed among 28 schools. As we move into the third year of the grant, Guilford County Schools is proud to say that we have over 10,000 applications for teaching positions in our hiring pipeline. We have seen an increase in the number of certified and experienced teachers applying for our hardest to staff areas. Our focus this year will be

to implement a model of customized professional development to support our teachers in increasing student achievement. Additionally, we have developed a strategic plan for better utilizing our Value-Added Data. During this upcoming school year, Value-Added Data will play a more prominent role in our school improvement processes, scheduling of classes, and tenure decisions.